

d'un chant d'*esani* (danse mortuaire).

Finalement, il consacre une dernière partie à la description d'autres instruments de musique Beti, tels que le *mvet*, le tambour à membrane *mbe*, le tambour à fente *nkul*, le hochet *nyas* et la cloche *nkeng*.

Ce livre peut être conseillé aux organologues qui s'intéressent aux xylophones de l'Afrique. Il est dommage que l'auteur-compositeur prive le lecteur de quelques vraies transcriptions, lesquelles pourraient montrer la relation et la fonction musicale des *mendzan* Beti.

JOS GANSEMANS

KIDAN DARAN SALLA: MUSIC FOR THE EVE OF THE MUSLIM FESTIVALS OF 'ID AL-FITR AND 'ID AL-KABIR IN KANO, NIGERIA by Fremont E. Besmer, published by the African Studies Program, Indiana University, 1974, pp. 84, \$2.00.

Although not published until 1974, this monograph is based on Dr. Besmer's early research into the court music of Kano, northern Nigeria. His short introductory section places the musical event firmly in its social setting, the Emir's palace and environs of the old walled city, and locates its performers, titled royal musicians, as a sub-group of the professional musician class engaged in carrying out their craft. The event itself – music performed on the eve of the Muslim festivals of *Id al-Fitr*, which marks the end of *Ramadan*, the month of fasting, and of *Id al-Kabir* – is described first in outline, so that the reader has an overall picture of what takes place, before being analysed in detail. Besmer distinguishes three segments – the first within the royal palace, the second at the house of an important official, the *Madaki*, while during the third, omitted because of research difficulties as well as for the absence of a regular pattern, musicians go their various ways about the city. The palace segment is further sub-divided into four performing areas, each with its prescribed group of musicians and sequence of activities. This highly organised and complicated structure presents difficulties of description only slightly less than those facing anyone attempting to describe what happens when a western symphony orchestra plays a piece by Stockhausen, yet Dr. Besmer's lucid exposition brings it clearly before us, and all that is lacking is a plan of the palace.

The second part presents a theoretical model of the event through analysis of its components in increasing detail with separate specifications for participants, musical instruments, venue, musical behaviour, non-musical activity and time placement, each of which is further sub-divided. Thus the Musical Behaviour specification gives examples of the music performed by each instrument within a group, together with the words (in Hausa and English) "voiced" by the instruments or sung by acclamators. Even this, we are reminded, is obviously "a mere fraction, albeit a representative one, of the totality".

In the final section Dr. Besmer analyses three types of praise-song structure – litany form, refrain form and a complex three-part form – setting out for each type its formal conditions (specifications for singer, scale, drum accompaniment, situation, instruments, etc.) and lexicon (musical and linguistic), together with examples of musical excerpts and their constituent structure in the form of a tree showing interrelated branches. The model is drawn from generative linguistics, that is, it deals not only with actual songs but potential ones in the sense that "a limited number of syntactic rules and formal conditions or features are capable of producing an infinite number of structures . . . within a particular song type" (p. 36).

The second and third parts thus present two different levels of analysis, one covering relations between the different musical groups taking part in the event, the other between components within separate aspects of performance. "The present model," concludes Besmer, "is yet to be completely developed as regards its effectiveness in describing the relationship between separate levels in so complex an event as *Daran Salla*, but it is felt that its potential for doing so is great" (p. 73).

This bald outline does less than justice to Dr. Besmer's ambitious scheme and its theoretical implications. One has only to compare his method with more orthodox analyses limited to the components of musical sound with a passing reference to the setting to realise the great advance

towards understanding what actually happens. Musicologists not versed in linguistics may find the terminology and symbols disconcerting, but they provide a metalanguage which can be quickly learnt from the explanations provided. Our only doubts are those voiced by Besmer himself, that the method has not been carried far enough. Obviously practical considerations made further investigation of so complex an event impossible for one observer, but this does not invalidate comment on the theoretical aspect. The test of any generative model is its ability, as Dr. Besmer claims, to generate, and this in turn depends both on completeness of the operational rules and what is fed into it. Thus the examples of "musical and linguistic (textual) lexicon, providing the items for substitution in terminal strings of analysis" (p. 62) depend for generative success on performers who know how to produce them, i.e. the vocal timbre to adopt in praise-singing, or the mode of striking the drums. One has only to visualise a group of western trained musicians attempting to "generate" the music from the data provided to realise the deficiency of formal analysis. In short, the model can only be worked by people who know how to work it and for whom, in consequence, it is unnecessary.

A more formidable criticism, now recognised by scholars in linguistics, is that structural analysis tends to treat components in isolation rather than investigate relations between them. Dr. Besmer attempts to overcome this through different levels of analysis, through insistence on song as "process", and in his musical transcriptions of excerpts. But a purely structural model, while showing the relationship, for example, between solo and chorus figures, does not anticipate chorus reactions to variations in intensity, tempo or phrasing by the soloist. In short, it postulates an ideal-soloist-ideal-chorus relationship which, since it never exists in reality, needs to be supplemented by non-structural variables whose significance in both speech and musical communication is becoming increasingly recognised. What, for example, is the effect of those verbal exchanges which pass between musicians in actual performance? What signals – verbal, instrumental or facial – are given which result in a phrase assuming one texture rather than another? In our concern with the structure of performance we tend to overlook that equally important question – why do performances differ? This is not to deprecate Dr. Besmer's significant contribution so much as to suggest how far we have to go and that we now need, as scholars of linguistics have already found, a method of analysis by which structure is subsumed into an overall ethnography of performance.

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LEAD US, LORD, a collection of African hymns. Compiled by Howard S. Olson, Augsburg Publishing House, U.S.A., 1977, pp. 22, \$1.50.

This small collection of twenty 'African' hymns with words in English is intended to let English-speaking churches experience singing African tunes. All but five of the melodies are from Tanzania (representing twelve different tribes), the others from Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya and Zambia.

The hymns are cast in the typical African 'Call and Response' form: half of them are in unison and half have harmony which is mostly such as Africans would use – parallel thirds or fourths. Both harmony and rhythm suggest that the original African versions have been 'edited' – in fact what we have is largely 'quasi'-African music. For instance the Bemba (Zambia) tune to the Lord's Prayer contains not only the parallel thirds always used by the Bemba, but parallel fourths and a dominant seventh – the two latter are simply not Bemba harmony. Similarly the Gogo tune to 'Shout to the Lord with Joy', while having plenty of parallel fourths, which is genuinely African, also contains several tritone fourths – and their inversion, diminished fifths. This, I suggest, is quite impossible as examples of true African harmony.

Again, the rhythm seems to have been 'edited' for practically all hymns are cast in European triple or duple time. Now it is indeed possible to find genuine African tunes in these forms but they are rare. In fact almost all African tunes could not be sung by Europeans because their rhythm is so completely unlike ours, usually consisting of a melody in what Curt Sachs called 'additive' rhythm, controlled by a handclap in 'divisive' rhythm. There are no handclaps in this